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101240Z Aug 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001289

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08//10/2015

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SUBJECT: VOTER REGISTRATION CENTER IN KASAI ORIENTAL
ATTACKED

Classified By: Poloff Gons Nachman for Reasons 1.4 B and D

1. (SBU) An unidentified individual set fire to a voter registration center in Mbuji Mayi, Kasai Oriental, August 9, causing slight injuries to four people, and minor damage to the registration equipment, Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) officials said. According to these officials, around 11 am, someone climbed a back wall and threw gasoline at the registration center, lit a fire, and fled. Electoral workers and the local population promptly put down the fire. Four people waiting to be registered suffered minor burns to their legs and some cables were damaged.

2. (SBU) Although the police are investigating the incident and no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, the voter registration center is located in the same neighborhood as Etienne Tshisekedi's Union for Democracy and Social Progress' (UDPS) provincial headquarters. CEI officials and the local population suspect UDPS militants are responsible for trying to burn down the registration center in Mbuji Mayi. (Note: UDPS leaders in Kasai Oriental have called on their supporters to boycott the voter registration process as "flawed". According to CEI officials, however, most UDPS supporters in Kinshasa registered to vote and they are doing so in Kasai Oriental as well. End Note.)

Comment

3. (C) The attack against the voter registration center in Mbuji Mayi, along with UDPS' calls for a boycott of voter registration in Kasai Oriental are part of a UDPS effort to derail the electoral process. The overwhelming majority of Congolese, however, have expressed their support for the electoral process and are unlikely to follow UDPS' lead. Tshisekedi is running out of time to join the process and

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risks further isolation from the international community and many potential Congolese voters if he continues to pursue an obstructionist policy opposed to long-desired DRC democratic elections.
MEECE